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well determined as Dr. Büchner seems to think. On the other hand he does not seem acquainted with the discovery of the human skull under Table Mountain in California, though these remains are probably more ancient than any human relics yet found in Europe.

Otherwise the work is a good digest of the leading facts and arguments on the scientific topics of which he treats, which the ordinary reader will not find in any available work.

The translation certainly does not gloss over the literary crudities of the original, while the book abounds in gross typographical blunders.

THE BIRDS OF THE TRES MARIAS AND SOCORRO ISLANDS..*—The Tres Marias form a group of several small, heavily wooded islands, situated off the Mexican coast, opposite the port of San Blas and about one hundred miles distant from that point. Socorro, the largest of the Revillagigedo group, is a barren volcanic island which rises abruptly to the height of two thousand feet, about three hundred and fifty miles southwest of the Tres Marias, and about the same distance from the Mexican coast. From their small size and their distance from the mainland, the fauna of these islands presents features of more than usual interest. Under the auspices of the Smithsonian Institution and the Boston Society of Natural History, Col. Grayson made several voyages to these islands for the purpose of exploring their natural history. In the present paper we have some of the results of Col. Grayson's labor, prepared from his notes and collections by Mr. George N. Lawrence. The paper contains copious and valuable notes respecting most of the species mentioned, with quite a full account of the physical characteristics of the islands. The Tres Marias list embraces fifty-two species, collected by Col. Grayson in 1865, 1866 and 1867. In general character the avian fauna of these islands closely resembles that of the adjoining main, though several strongly marked insular races are easily recognized, and is hence decidedly tropical. The only northern United States species recorded are such as have a wide range of distribution or are semitropical, the majority being raptorial birds. But one aquatic species (the sooty tern) is given,

*On the Physical Geography and Natural History of the Islands of the Tres Marias and of Socorro, off the western Coast of Mexico. By Col. Andrew J. Grayson. Edited by Geo. N. Lawrence, Proc. Bost. Soc. Nat. Hist. Vol. xiv, pp. 261-303. April, 1872. (Read June 7, 1871).

contrary to what one would anticipate, and the waders number only six species. Seven hummingbirds are reported, five being given by Mr. Lawrence on the authority of Capt. J. Xantus. The list is hence evidently more or less incomplete, Col. Grayson mentioning only such as he actually obtained or observed. Unfortunately no dates are given in the notes, and we are hence left in doubt as to the season of occurrence of the birds mentioned.

Socorro Island was visited twice by Col. Grayson, but the chief part of his collections there seems to have been made during the last ten days of May, 1867. The list embraces fourteen species, only five of which were found at the Tres Marias. Several appear to be known as yet only from this island,* and others only from this and the Tres Marias, though each has near relatives on the Mexican main. Among those of special interest obtained here were several specimens of Whitney's owl (*Micrathene Whitneyi* Coues) known formerly only from the single specimen obtained by Dr. Cooper at Fort Mohave, in 1861, but since found also at Mazatlan by Grayson, and in Arizona by Bendire.

The itinerary† given of Col. Grayson's voyages on these expeditions conveys a vivid picture of the dangers as well as annoyance, to which the enthusiastic naturalist is often exposed in the pursuit of his treasures. Though shipwrecked at Socorro, he seems not to have been daunted in his explorations, but extending his researches to other localities, he fell a victim to a fever contracted while collecting at the Isabel Islands, in the summer of 1869.‡ To Col. Grayson ornithologists are chiefly indebted for our present knowledge of the ornithological fauna of northwestern Mexico, and in his death science lost a devotee of rare zeal and industry. —J. A. A.

BOTANY.

Law of Angular Divergence in the Branches of Plants.— Mr. Thomas Meehan said that of all the problems that faced the botanist, few seemed more impenetrable than the law which governed the angular divergence in the branches of plants. Some grew quite prostrate and others, though closely allied species, might be strictly erect. At the present season of the year we may

* See Ann. Lyc. Nat. Hist. N. Y. x, pp. 1-18, March, 1871.
† Also published in the "Overland Monthly," September, 1872.
‡ See "Overland Monthly," February, 1870.